Vision for the 1990s

A strategic map to guide the Manitoba Department of Agriculture into the next century

Manitoba
Agriculture

92-03574/

Our blueprint into the next century

I'm pleased to introduce VISION FOR THE 1990s, the Manitoba Department of Agriculture's "blueprint" for guiding our activities into the next century. This vision represents our long-term recommitment towards building a strong and prosperous agriculture and food sector within our province.

This sector is critically important to Manitoba's economy, contributing directly or indirectly approximately 10 to 12 per cent of the province's gross domestic product (GDP). The industry's gross value of production accounts for approximately $4 billion and employs or generates employment for close to 70,000 persons, approximately one out of every seven jobs in Manitoba.

We are proud of the high quality, abundance and safety of Manitoba's agricultural products which are among the best in the world. We're equally proud of our farmers who are among the most efficient, technically up-to-date producers anywhere.

The future strength and prosperity of our agriculture and food sector is vitally based on its ability to adapt to and benefit from the constant change occurring within its diverse and competitive environment. This sector has immense opportunities along with the dynamic challenges of a changing market.

In facing the future Manitoba Agriculture is committed to providing leadership in working closely with our strategic partners — all those participants having a stake in the future of the agriculture and food industry.

As part of this commitment, Manitoba Agriculture developed this VISION FOR THE 1990s after consultation with all major participants in the industry — including farmers, producer organizations, researchers, agri-business, consumers and other levels of government. Over the next ten years the successful realization of this vision will depend on the close cooperation and joint effort of the department with our strategic partners. Together we can enhance the social and economic well-being of those within the industry while doing so on a sustainable basis.

I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to all those people who participated in the consultative process leading to the development of our VISION FOR THE 1990s. It was most encouraging that department staff and many representatives of the industry were able to work closely together in laying the foundation for developing this overall guide to our future. We, in Manitoba Agriculture, look forward to continuing this relationship with the agriculture and food industry throughout the 1990s.

▲ ***Honourable Glen Findlay, Minister of Agriculture***

Revitalizing our sense of purpose and direction

▲*Greg Lacomy, Deputy Minister of Agriculture*

During the course of over a year, Manitoba Agriculture conducted a strategic management process involving many staff and sectorial clients — who are our customers. This extensive consultative and review process heightened the department's awareness of the need to adjust its priorities and approaches for addressing the emerging needs of the agriculture and food industry.

The strategic management review provided the basis for renewing and revitalizing Manitoba Agriculture's overall sense of purpose and direction. Accordingly, we asked ourselves some very fundamental questions as to who we were, what our relationship was with our clients, and how we did things. In doing so, we found it necessary to re-identify and reaffirm our department's philosophy, values and operational principles. Through this review, we again reaffirmed our commitment to our clients as our number one priority — the reason why our department exists.

In consulting with our strategic partners through the strategic management review, we were able to re-chart the department's long-term priorities and approaches for addressing the changing trends of the 1990s. For example, historically Manitoba Agriculture had placed great emphasis on increasing farm output and productivity. However, in reassessing emerging trends, we became increasingly aware of the need to strengthen our emphasis in such areas as market orientation and development, value-added and diversification, risk reduction, and sustainable development.

VISION FOR THE 1990s reflects Manitoba Agriculture's commitment to meet this need. In doing so, the department will strengthen its linkages in a variety of areas, including the field of research and development.

Although our strategic management review has culminated in this booklet, this proactive process will continue as an ongoing departmental function. We cannot afford to be complacent knowing that the economic viability and prosperity of our clients is dependent on a changing and competitive environment — an environment sometimes marked with great uncertainty. Manitoba Agriculture will continue to be vigilant and flexible in its leadership role in adapting its programs and activities to meet the changing realities of the industry.

In strengthening our ties with our traditional strategic partners, such as the University of Manitoba Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences, and working more closely with such stakeholders as consumer groups, we look forward to the opportunities ahead for creating a more vibrant and prosperous agriculture and food industry.

The role & mission of Manitoba Agriculture

▲ Mission

The **mission** of Manitoba Agriculture is:

To sustain and enhance the economic and personal well-being of participants within the agriculture and food sector.

▲ Role

In support of this mission the department's **role** is:

To provide leadership and a range of services to assist agriculture and food sector participants in creating a sustainable economic climate to improve their net income and general well-being.

Priorities

In carrying out its mission Manitoba Agriculture is committed to overall **provincial government priorities**, including **sustainable development, community economic development, affirmative action and employment creation**. Further, in support of its mission the department provides a range of essential services to support the **maintenance and enhancement of family farms**. Manitoba Agriculture is committed to providing these services economically and effectively.

Delivery

The department is committed to maintaining and strengthening a technology transfer system that provides meaningful, current and unbiased information to its clients.

▲ ***The department is committed to improving the net income and well-being of agriculture and food sector participants.***

Strategic goals

Manitoba Agriculture is committed to achieving a series of primary goals in support of its mission. These primary goals are identified below:

- Expansion/diversification of agricultural commodities, especially those with potential for value-added processing in Manitoba.
- Development and expansion of market opportunities for primary and processed agricultural products, particularly within international markets or through import replacement.
- Reduction of economic risks for farmers through enhancement and stabilization of farm incomes.
- Conservation and improvement of Manitoba's soil and water resources and the environment.
- Provision of opportunities for younger and beginning farmers to enter agriculture and develop viable farming operations.
- Preservation and strengthening of family farms in Manitoba.

▲ ***Manitoba Agriculture is committed to preserving and strengthening family farms.***

Our guiding principles

During the department's Strategic Management process and through a survey of our clients, our department heightened its awareness of how it was perceived by others and how it perceived itself.

In conjunction with the Strategic Management process, Manitoba Agriculture began to review and reconfirm its overall corporate philosophy, beliefs and values. Through this reassessment the department reaffirmed and strengthened its commitment to the guiding principles identified below:

▲ Our clients – our #1 priority

We believe that serving our clients – who are our customers – is the primary reason why our department exists. Our clients are those who use our services – ranging from farmers and food processors to Cabinet and other departments. **Serving our clients is our number one priority!**

▲ Superior job performance

At all employee levels we remain committed to excellence, pride and professionalism to achieve a superior job performance.

▲ We are part of an overall team

We share a commitment to being part of a greater organization, our department, which takes precedence over any of its "parts." Similarly, we share a commitment to being part of a still greater organization, the Manitoba government. At all employee levels we strive to understand our individual roles within our department's overall mission, goals and guiding principles.

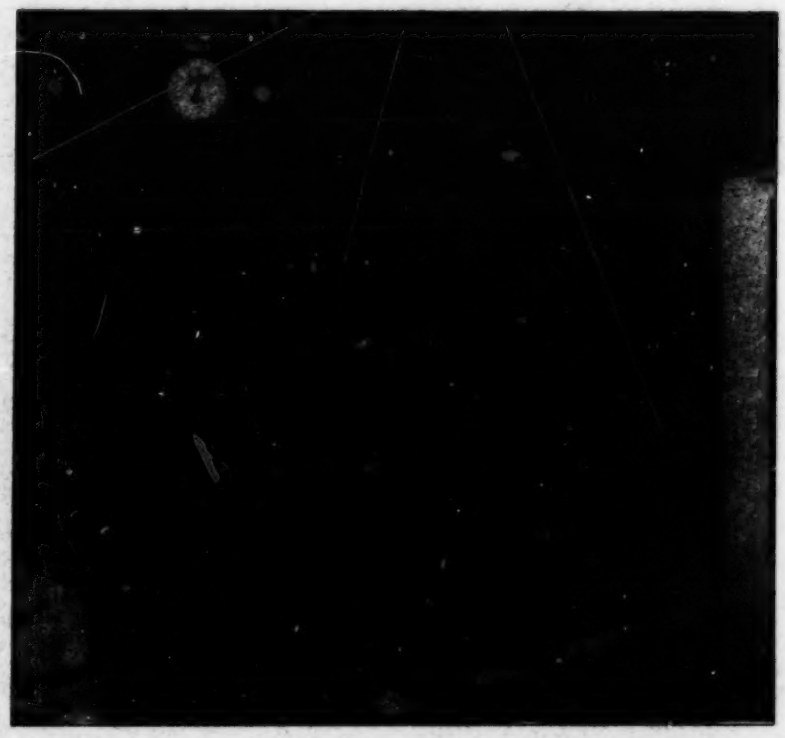
▲ Our public trusteeship role

We are entrusted with funds and property owned by and managed for the public. At all employee levels we are committed to ensuring that we make the most effective and efficient use of these entrusted resources. Our employees strive to ensure that the public receives maximum value for every tax dollar we spend.

▲ ***Our client is number one.***

Strategic actions for the 1990s – an overview

This section identifies the planned strategic actions of Manitoba Agriculture for addressing the challenges of the 1990s. These planned long-term approaches were designed over the course of a year through the department's strategic management process. Manitoba Agriculture launched this consultative process to ensure that the department would play a meaningful leadership role in working closely with the agriculture and food industry in proactively meeting the opportunities and challenges into the next century.



▲ ***Manitoba Agriculture is committed to working closely with its strategic partners.***

The process involved: (1) consultation with Manitoba Agriculture's strategic partners from the agriculture and food sector; and (2) input at all employee levels in the department. A comprehensive, consultative undertaking helped to ensure an in-depth understanding and thorough review in selecting the most practical strategic options for the future.

Six department focus teams were appointed comprised of department staff from across the organization. Each team reviewed a specific sectorial theme area in conjunction with our strategic partners. The six key themes were marketing, diversification and value-added, risk reduction, sustainable development, enhanced productivity and competitiveness, and human resources. In addition, another theme on industry promotion and consumer awareness emerged during the strategic management process.

Following focus team presentations, intensive reviews and executive priority setting, a plan for the future was laid out. As a result, the strategic directions found in this section identify the department's long-term priority and activity thrusts. However, the department has the flexibility to adjust these planned directions to address any new and emerging trends within the industry. As trends unfold throughout the 1990s, Manitoba Agriculture will review and revise some of these planned strategic directions as necessary.

Marketing/market orientation

▲ Issue

There are significant opportunities to increase Manitoba's sales of primary and processed agricultural products in domestic and international markets. These opportunities can be seized through the department strengthening its leadership role in improving the coordination of market development opportunities between the private and public sectors, including different levels of government.

▲ Background

Over the next 10 years there will be considerable marketing windows to penetrate both domestically and abroad. However, these marketing opportunities exist within a changing and dynamic environment. It will be essential for producers, processors and other participants within the agriculture and food sector to recognize market trends — especially in assessing changing consumer demands and international trade patterns.

Within this dynamic environment there is a need for the department to work with farmers, farm organizations, agri-business and other governments to develop strategies and programs aimed at penetrating local, national and foreign markets. Such an undertaking will require an intensified "growing for markets" theme.

▲ Strategic Action

• Manitoba Agriculture will expand its market development and promotion of Manitoba food products both nationally and internationally.

• Staff will strengthen communication with clients regarding information for developing products for markets and the availability of government marketing services to clients.

• Staff will enhance assistance to the department's strategic partners in the market development of primary food and higher value-added food products, including specialty products, to meet consumer demands for safe and nutritious food.

• The department will improve the coordination of its market related activities across the organization. Staff throughout the department will upgrade their marketing knowledge and skills to incorporate a marketing/market orientation.

▲ ***Opportunities can be seized in international and domestic markets.***

Diversification and value-added

▲ *Manitoba Agriculture is committed to expanding value-added production and processing.*

▲ Issue

There is a need to enhance communication and coordination between participants within the agriculture-food production, processing and marketing chain. The department is committed to providing a leadership, as well as a catalytic and coordination role, in assisting these participants to expand value-added production and processing within Manitoba.

▲ Background

The development of Manitoba's agricultural economy is greatly dependent on export markets. International commodity-based quotas and subsidies restrict Manitoba producers' access to these lucrative markets. In order to maintain or improve their economic viability and market share, Manitoba producers must further diversify their operations and increase the value of the products they sell through processing.

The province's potential to capitalize on diversification and value-added opportunities depends on the coordination and availability of investment capital, skilled labour, entrepreneurial drive, and the ability to use competitive advantage to market on a wider scale.

▲ Strategic Action

• A marketing and value-added forum will be established to identify market opportunities, market development approaches, diversification and value-added opportunities. This body will serve as a coordinating and catalytic means for supporting research and development as well as joint ventures between the department and its strategic partners within the agriculture and food sector.

• The department, in conjunction with the Manitoba Agricultural Services Coordinating Committee (MASCC), will facilitate effective coordination of the public and private sectors in identifying research priorities and the undertaking of research projects.

• Manitoba Agriculture will strive to strengthen linkages between provincial governments where complementary development opportunities exist.

• The department will heighten efforts in identifying markets for value-added agricultural products and for evaluating associated production and processing requirements.

• Greater support will be extended to applied research on value-added products and products that reflect emerging market opportunities.

• Staff will actively work with producers to examine both on-farm diversification options, including broadening of commodity types, and the introduction/expansion of farm based value-added opportunities.

Risk reduction measures

▲ Issue

There is a need to strengthen various government undertakings to assist producers in reducing financial risks of farming. Producers need risk reduction systems to cushion the negative impact of price and yield instability on net farm income.

▲ Background

In recent years producers have faced difficulties such as falling grain prices, rising input costs, high interest rates, droughts and floods. These variable factors have significantly contributed to the net income instability of producers. The grain sector especially has been vulnerable to price instability in this regard. Without the intervention of various government programs, net farm income would have been considerably lower.

For the 1990s the department has adopted an overall strategy of risk reduction through the three-lines-of-defence concept. The first line-of-defence involves risk reduction through farmer self-reliance initiatives; the second line calls for government "safety net" or income stabilization programs such as GRIP and NISA; the third line relies on ad hoc special payment programs to stabilize farm income during emergency periods within the agricultural sector.

▲ Strategic Action

• The department shall build on its three-lines-of-defence strategy utilizing this integrated risk management approach to reduce the financial risks of farming. Efforts will be increased to ensure that farmers are aware of the importance of self reliance initiatives in ensuring the viability of their operations.

• Extension activities will involve a higher proportion of risk management delivery, including more intensive activity regarding the first and second lines of defence.

• Manitoba Agriculture staff will intensify educational efforts to help farmers avoid over reliance on credit.

• The Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation will investigate further options to assist producers in areas such as young farmer assistance, loan guarantee programs, alternate credit sources and programs for part-time farmers.

• Safety net programs will be continually reviewed to ensure that they are sensitive to the needs of participants while maintaining their viability and equity.

▲ There is a need for producer-risk reduction systems to cushion against price and yield fluctuations.

Sustainable development

▲ Issue

There is a need for Manitoba Agriculture to encourage and support the sustainable development of the agriculture and food sector into the next century. This sector's future viability and prosperity is dependent on the ability of the province's soil and water resources to support long term agricultural production. In this respect, Manitoba Agriculture is committed to playing a key proactive role in the stewardship of these resources.

▲ Background

Agriculture and food is one of Manitoba's most important industries, with great opportunities for future economic growth. The maintenance and growth of this industry can only be achieved through the land's ability to support agricultural production. Further, the use of the province's soil and water for agricultural production must be compatible with growing public concerns for food safety and environmental protection.

▲ There is a need to encourage environmentally sound production practices.

Over the past decade, through government programs, extension activities and a strong conservation ethic, Manitoba farmers have increasingly demonstrated their commitment to environmentally sound production practices. However, there remain many opportunities to embrace research information and education, and receive short-term assistance to implement production methods which are environmentally sound.

▲ Strategic Action

• Manitoba Agriculture will work in concert with coordinating agencies, industry partners and other stakeholders to adopt a long-term approach to identifying and resolving environmental issues.

•The department, building on such initiatives as the Canada-Manitoba Soil Conservation Agreement, will intensify its efforts to conserve and improve the quality of the province's soil resources.

• Manitoba Agriculture will approach water resource issues within the framework of multi-resource management involving various other government agencies.

• The department will emphasize long term land conservation, research and development; and develop environmentally sound policies and programs to guide irrigation practices in Manitoba.

• Manitoba Agriculture staff will examine integrated pest management techniques to provide producers with alternative means of pest control.

• The department will advocate the rights of existing farm operators and encourage the preservation of farm land from non-agricultural use for the future of the agriculture and food industry.

Enhanced productivity and competitiveness

▲ Issue

There is a requirement for the department to re-examine its leadership and catalyst role in coordinating the efforts of producer groups, commodity organizations, researchers and agribusiness to enhance farm productivity and competitiveness.

▲ Background

Within the highly complex and changing agriculture and food environment, there is a continuing need for farmers to upgrade their productivity along with their competitive knowledge and skills about the marketplace. They must do so to keep their farming operations economically viable in the future. Continuing support must be extended for research and development in all fields, including crop and livestock development, pest control and farm management systems.

Many farmers need to take advantage of changing technology. In particular, they need to continually upgrade their farm management systems and ensure that there is a strong integrated link incorporating production, financing and marketing factors in their farm operation decisions. It is also important that economic viability and sustainable production be incorporated within their decisions towards productivity enhancement.

▲ Strategic Action

- Production decisions based on relevant economic data and long-term sustainability information will be actively promoted by the department as an integral part of a whole farm business management system.
- Manitoba Agriculture will promote and support the formation of producer and commodity groups as well as marketing clubs.
- When addressing farm productivity and competitiveness issues, Manitoba Agriculture will utilize a team approach for research, problem solving and technology transfer, with input from a cross section of departmental staff, agribusiness, producers and researchers.
- Manitoba Agriculture will continue to encourage farmers to improve their record keeping procedures and production technology.
- Enhanced training and extension information programs will assist farm operators to improve their planning, management and technical skills.

▲ There is a need for integrated farm management decisions incorporating production, financing and marketing factors.

Human resources

▲ ***There is a need to upgrade farm management and leadership skills within an increasingly competitive industry.***

▲ Issue

Manitoba Agriculture must strengthen its leadership and support in helping farm families acquire the necessary knowledge and skills for their farm operations to be viable through the 1990s.

▲ Background

The most essential resource in the agriculture and food sector will continue to be its human resource. There is a need to upgrade the knowledge and skills of producers, farm families and producer organizations to meet the future challenges of an increasingly complex and competitive industry.

In particular there is a need to focus on assisting producers and their families in strengthening farm management and planning skills. As well, continuing support, through assistance and educational services, is required to encourage younger and beginning farmers to enter agriculture and build viable farming operations.

▲ Strategic Action

- Manitoba Agriculture will strive to strengthen its partnership with the private sector to provide comprehensive educational and training services to producers and their families. These services will be aimed at upgrading business management knowledge and skills — in areas such as production, financing, marketing and life skills.
- The department will reinforce its education efforts by incorporating increased farm business management skills, such as farm transfer knowledge, into its comprehensive consultation services available to farm families.
- Manitoba Agriculture will strengthen its support to producer business and resource management clubs.
- The department will continue its support for 4-H coordinated activities directed towards enhancing rural leadership as well as personal development and training. Manitoba Agriculture will do so while promoting increased 4-H volunteer activity and closer liaison with youth service agencies.
- Methods to help young farmers enter agriculture and maintain viable operations will be evaluated by the department.

Industry promotion and consumer awareness

▲ Issue

There is a need for further communication with the Manitoba public about the importance and contribution of the agriculture and food industry to the province. As well, enhanced communication is needed to increase consumer confidence in the quality and safety of Manitoba's food supply.

▲ Background

Historically, there has been insufficient promotion of the nature and contribution of the agriculture and food sector to Manitoba. The general public, to a great extent, is unaware of the industry's critical importance to Manitobans. There is also a general lack of public awareness about the contribution made by all levels of the industry from the farm to the consumer's table.

Many consumers are becoming increasingly knowledgeable about what food they need for good nutrition and health. However, many still lack confidence in the quality and safety of their food supply. Their fears are partly associated with a lack of information, and misunderstanding of government regulations, standards and practices concerning food production, processing and handling. As well, public interest in both the environment and health is contributing to an increasing consumer preference for certain kinds of food products. Consumers need to be assured that the department is proactive in addressing their concerns about food quality and safety.

▲ Strategic Action

• Manitoba Agriculture will provide a leadership role, in cooperation with the industry and other groups, in publicly promoting the sustainable nature and economic importance of the agriculture and food sector to Manitoba.

• Department staff will expand their involvement within the school system to facilitate youth awareness on the nature of the industry and agriculture career opportunities.

• Staff will provide information and educational programs to increase public awareness of the high quality, low prices, abundance, variety and safety of Manitoba food products.

• Manitoba Agriculture, in cooperation with health professionals and consumer groups, will discuss with and communicate to the public the safety and quality of Manitoba food products.

▲ There is a need to heighten awareness of the important contribution of the agriculture and food industry to Manitoba's overall economy.

Acknowledgements

The development of VISION FOR THE 1990s was the result of consultations with our strategic partners in the industry and the dedicated effort of Manitoba Agriculture staff.

Industry consultations were critical in the department's charting a course for its future strategic direction. We extend our deep appreciation and thanks for the contribution of numerous individuals and organizations who provided suggestions and recommendations and look forward to their close and continued consultation in the future.

Listed here are sectorial participants who were part of the strategic management process which made this VISION FOR THE 1990s possible.

Department staff played an integral role in identifying the emerging trends and opportunities, as well as in proposing practical approaches for addressing the future challenges of the agriculture and food industry.

For over a year, staff on six focus teams conducted reviews and made recommendations on the department's strategic options for the 1990s.

In addition, department employees outside the focus groups contributed to this vision through their feedback, advice and informational assistance, as well as through their secretarial and administrative support. Our thanks is extended to all employee participants.

Strategic partner participants

Agriculture Canada
Agricultural Employment Services
Assiniboine Community College
Beatrice Foods Inc.
Brandt, Bernie - grain, hog and poultry producer
Burns Meats
Canadian Bison Association
Canola Council of Canada
Canadian Mental Health Association (Manitoba Branch)
Canadian Seed Growers' Association
Canadian Special Crops Association
Canadian Wheat Board
Chartered Banks (Bank of Montreal/C.I.B.C./Royal Bank)
Consumers' Association of Canada
Credit Union Central of Manitoba
Eastern Manitoba Holstein Club
Farm Credit Corporation
Federal/Provincial Safety Net Committee
Federal Task Force on Finance and Management
Flax Council of Canada
Gall, Peter J.
Gilson, Clay; Canada Science Council
Granny's Poultry Co-operative (Manitoba) Ltd.
Green Valley Feeds
Industry Science and Technology Canada (ISTC)
Keystone Agricultural Producers
Keystone Vegetable Producers' Association
Landscape Manitoba
Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation
Manitoba Cattle Producers' Association
Manitoba Chamber of Commerce
Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation
Manitoba Chicken Broiler Producers' Marketing Board
Manitoba Egg Producers' Marketing Board
Manitoba 4-H Ambassadors
Manitoba Greenhouse Growers' Association
Manitoba Industry Trade and Tourism
Manitoba Farm Mediation Board
Manitoba Milk Producers' Marketing Board
Manitoba Milk Recording Corporation
Manitoba Pool Elevators
Manitoba Pork Est.
Manitoba Pulse Growers' Association
Manitoba Red Meat Forum
Manitoba Round Table on Sustainable Development
Manitoba Rural Youth Organization
Manitoba Sheep Association
Manitoba Turkey Producers' Marketing Board
Manitoba Vegetable Producers' Marketing Board
Manitoba Weed Supervisors' Association
Manitoba-North Dakota Zero-Tillage Farmers' Association
National Grains Bureau
Organic Producers Association of Manitoba
Prairie Fruit Growers' Association
Rigby, Grant - raspberry producer and processor
Rural Development Institute
Seven Regions Health Centre
Soil Conservation Districts
Stuartburn-Piney Agricultural Development Association
The Wheat Belt Community Futures Committee
Threshold Technologies Company
Union of Manitoba Municipalities
United Grain Growers
University of Manitoba, Faculty of Agriculture & Food Sciences
Vegetable Growers' Association of Manitoba
Westarc
Western Canadian Wheat Growers
Western Flax Growers' Association
Western Grain Stabilization Administration
Winpak Ltd.
Woodstone Foods Limited (A Division of Ogilvie Mills Ltd.)
XCAN Grain Ltd.

Focus team contributors

▲ Diversification and Value-Added Team

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▲ Human Resource Team

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▲ Safety Net (Risk Reduction) Team

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Charles Grant
Neil Hamilton
Janet Honey
Jerry Moffat

▲ Enhanced Productivity and Competitiveness Team

Dave Donaghy, *Chairperson*
John Dean
Garry Epp
Wally Happychuk

▲ Marketing/Market Orientation Team

Andrew Dickson, *Chairperson*
Lorne Martin
Frank Pitura
Bob Ward

▲ Sustainable Development Team

John Neabel, *Chairperson*
Mona Cornock
Mark Goodwin
Dave Huminicki
Bryan Yusishen

In addition to the focus team members, staff both at the central and regional level acted in a supporting, facilitating or coordinating capacity in the development of VISION FOR THE 1990s. Some of these additional department contributors came from the departmental executive and program analysis branch.

This publication is available in large print, audiotape or braille on request.